



It Started with a Bang

bomb

thriller

79 0 3

Chapter 1 by CF.Gold

It was open on a Thursday.

The Basilica de Santa Maria Novella was some place she had always wanted to visit. The frescoes and the paintings she saw on the websites and the guidebook of Florence that she bought hastily at the airport enchanted her to no end. It was as if she was meant to be there - and now, she was finally able to go.

Her eager footsteps paused for a second upon seeing the majestic facade. Perhaps she was not worthy of entering such a sacred place. The imposing structure and its harsh, geometric designs seemed to warn her not to take another step closer to the building. It was God's house and she was not God's child - but she has always been a rebel and the tantalising thought of disobeying the ultimate creator caused her to heft her heavy backpack a little higher on her shoulders and dare the first step. Then another. Then another. Then finally, with a liberating scream that scared the pigeons from their crumbs, ran through the square and into the church courtyard.

'5 euros for a ticket please.'

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A discreet exchanging of objects took place between their joined hands, before she smiled disarmingly, touched the guard's shivering shoulder and turned towards the darkened entrance at the end of the path, her hand gripping tightly around a small, silver cylinder.

'God bless you sir.'

She felt the quiet before she heard it. The soft chirping of the birds still echoed in her ears when the mantle of silence descended upon her shoulders. It was like being crowned with a glorious task; a feeling that she felt only once before, when the parcel finally arrived at her door. The parcel that currently sat secured within her backpack. It came by courier with no obvious, identifiable features upon the surface of the box - until placed under UV light. Then it lit up like a Christmas tree with the unique symbols and markings of the secret code. The girl didn't know what to feel. Should she feel like Santa Claus for being the one delivering the gift? Or perhaps the lucky child on the nice list who was given the chance to carry out this momentous task? Also within her backpack lay the single sheet of folded A4 paper that came with the package, still in its pristine condition, the words of a certain poet written across the front of it...with a twist:

"This is the way the world ends,
This is the way the word ends,
Not with a bang, but a whimper.'

-- and maybe a bang too?"

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